



# News Release

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Contacts: [Dave Kern](#), HIV and Adult Viral Hepatitis  
[Allison Cook](#), Communications Office

360-236-3421  
360-236-4022

## **HIV in Washington: streamlined system aims to decrease new infections**

*Washington's HIV cases remain steady at an average of 570 yearly*

**OLYMPIA** — A new state strategy to reduce HIV infections focuses state resources in communities with the most new cases while streamlining the system to save money. The new system retains care and access to medications for residents living with and most at risk for HIV.

On January 1, the Department of Health will centralize HIV service delivery, replacing a six-region system that's been in place since 1988. The change is a result of a bill passed in 2010.

"HIV is devastating to people and families, and there's more work to do to prevent it," said Secretary of Health Mary Selecky. "We've got to make sure we keep providing services for people who are infected and at highest risk for becoming infected, which will help reduce the number of new HIV cases in Washington."

Our state's new cases remained steady from 2005 to 2009 at an average of 570 per year. Gay and bisexual men continue to be most affected by the HIV epidemic here. Between 2005 and 2009 gay and bisexual men made up 63 percent of all new HIV cases in the state. These steady trends show a new approach is needed to stem the tide of new infections. With life-saving care and treatment, the number of people living with HIV continues to increase. More than 10,000 Washington residents are currently living with HIV.

December 1 is World AIDS Day. It's a reminder that HIV is still here and we can all make a difference in stopping its spread. The agency's HIV and Adult Viral Hepatitis Prevention Program provides leadership and support to local health agencies, community organizations, and other partners to promote effective HIV and adult viral hepatitis prevention.

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Visit the Washington Department of Health website at <http://www.doh.wa.gov> for a healthy dose of information.